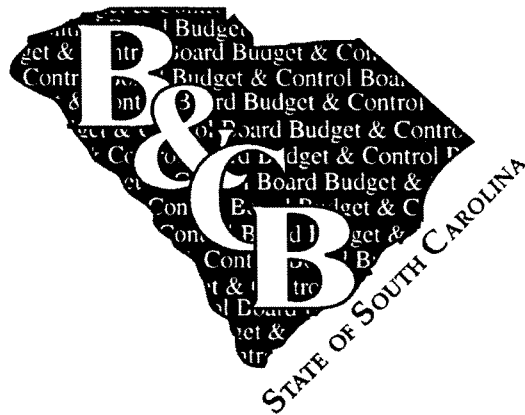


June 6, 2003

State Government News Summary



**Prepared by the Budget and Control Board
Office of the Executive Director**



Posted on Thu, Jun. 05, 2003

Legislature wraps up work in tight budget year

AMY GEIER EDGAR and JIM DAVENPORT
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Lawmakers wrapped up work in one of the worst budget years in recent history and went home Thursday.

The General Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m. after spending the day anxiously trying to complete work on a number of bills.

The state budget continued to dump bad news on lawmakers even in the final hours of the session.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Hugh Leatherman told senators that state revenue in May was down \$68 million. The state's tax collections had been running about \$8 million ahead of estimates, but now the state may be facing a year-end shortfall. Only about \$38 million is left in reserve accounts and "that will be wiped out totally," Leatherman said, adding he was unsure how the state could handle any remaining shortfall.

"It's going to be very difficult to comply with our constitutional mandate for a balanced budget, but we will do that," said Leatherman, R-Florence.

Meanwhile, the Senate failed to pass a bill calling the General Assembly back on June 17 to deal with any vetoes Gov. Mark Sanford issues on the \$5.3 billion state budget approved by the Legislature Tuesday.

That means legislators won't have a chance to consider vetoes until they return in January. However, Sanford could call the General Assembly back before that, and he said Thursday that he might consider doing so.

"It's a dangerous precedent we're setting," said Senate President Pro Tem Glenn McConnell, R-Charleston. "We're engaging in Russian roulette."

Sanford could veto programs that are critical, even eliminate funding for the Legislature, he said.

But Senate Minority Leader John Land, D-Manning, said the General Assembly does not need to come back for a special session at the expense of taxpayers.

"The Republican governor, the Republican-controlled House, the Republican-controlled Senate didn't finish their work on time," said Land. "They're asking the Democrats to come to their aid to extend the session. If the Republican governor wants to veto something that the Republican House and Republican Senate passed, that's an interfamily fight. Just let them fight."

The fights went on throughout the day. While the House took a lunch break, the Senate was held in filibuster mode. Sen. John Kuhn, R-Charleston, took the floor to hold up a bill that would allow the state to borrow more money for colleges and universities to make \$250 million in improvements "during the height of the recession."

Kuhn said the state's three research schools - Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina and the University of South Carolina - were greedy because they take all but \$30 million of the money.

Calling the three research universities greedy, "is over the line," Sen. Scott Richardson, R-Hilton Head Island, said as tempers flared over the filibuster. The bill ultimately failed.

During the past week, House members have complained about a "meltdown" in the Senate.

McConnell said there was no meltdown, but an "anger-down."

"Anger has gotten in the way of good judgment," he said.

Major bills got held up in the Senate, including Public Service Commission reform and a primary seat belt law.

Before the clock struck 5 and the session ended, the House and Senate did manage to reach agreement on a campaign finance reform bill and legislation that would lower the legal blood-alcohol limit for drivers to 0.08 percent.

House and Senate Democrats piled the blame on Republicans for failing to get key legislation passed.

The Democrats issued a legislative report card for the GOP-controlled General Assembly. Most of the subjects - education, health care, environment, public safety and the budget - received a failing grade, said House Minority Leader James Smith.

One bright spot was the predatory lending legislation passed and signed into law Tuesday that would protect borrowers from unfair high-interest loans and unscrupulous lenders, said Smith, D-Columbia.

House Speaker David Wilkins, R-Greenville, acknowledged this was the toughest budget year he's faced, but said the House stuck to its priorities.

"The bottom line is, Medicaid is fully funded and we increased education funding without raising taxes," Wilkins said.

Rep. Doug Jennings, D-Marlboro, accused Sanford of a lack of leadership during his first six months in office.

Sanford "took a hands-off approach to dealing with the General Assembly the entire year and, so far as I can tell, accomplished as little of his legislative priorities in his first year as any governor in our lifetime," Jennings said.

As Jennings was talking about Sanford's leadership, the governor was trying to work out final deals on the DUI .08 bill. Sanford worked with House and Senate conferees on the bill, cajoling them to compromise.

"What you've seen over the course of these five months is an increasing degree of personal involvement," Sanford said. "I think you've seen the appropriate level of involvement and leadership. What you don't want to do in a legislatively dominated state is come in day one and say 'You guys don't know what you're doing. Here's how we're doing it.'"



General Assembly ends tumultuous session

Medicaid reform, other major issues left hanging amid partisan clashes

BY BRIAN HICKS

Of The Post and Courier Staff

COLUMBIA--By the time the 2003 General Assembly adjourned Thursday afternoon, the legislative session had turned into a chaotic circus of partisan posturing, filibustering and deal-brokering.

And that was just in the Senate anteroom.

In the end, lawmakers limped away from the Statehouse with a bare-bones \$5 billion budget, the prospect of a \$500 million budget deficit come next year's session, and no way to come back and override any veto Gov. Mark Sanford makes in the next week.

Although Republicans declared victory for holding the line on taxes and Democrats criticized the GOP for failing to fund the state's basic needs, both sides left the capital sounding like a losing high school football team muttering "just wait until next year."

In fact, much of the major work the Legislature hoped to accomplish this year, such as Medicaid reform, Public Service Commission reform, a referendum on minibottles and government restructuring, will have to wait until next year.

But in the final minutes of the session, the General Assembly managed to lower the state's legal blood alcohol limit to .08, pass campaign finance reform and maintain K-12 per-pupil spending at this year's level.

The day began with Democrats throwing a wrench into Republican plans to extend the session by a few days to deal with any vetoes Sanford makes to the 2003-04 budget.

To extend the session, which by law had to end at 5 p.m. Thursday, the Legislature would have had to approve a *sine die* resolution by a two-thirds majority, which meant both parties would have to agree. Although the House passed the extension, Senate Democrats refused to go along.

The trick ensures that, barring a Sanford call for a special session, any vetoes the governor makes will stand until at least January, when the General Assembly reconvenes. Sen. John Land, the Democratic leader, said Republicans had mismanaged the state's finances terribly and not lived up to responsibilities and he did not see any sense in costing taxpayers \$75,000 a

day for an extended session to let them do more.

"When the people of South Carolina really find out what has been done to education and health care, they are really going to be excited," said Land, D-Manning. "Democrats put up plans to raise the revenue and the Republican majorities in both houses defeated them. The blame lies at their feet for the worst budget in South Carolina history."

The Democratic Caucus held a press conference on the Statehouse steps giving the Legislature an "F" in every category except consumer protection, which earned a "C" because of the predatory lending act. Rep. James E. Smith, the House Democratic leader, said the Republican-controlled House had rigged the budget so badly that, "they raided a \$4,000 donation box to help balance a \$5 billion budget."

Rep. Jerry Govan, chairman of the House Black Legislative Caucus, said that voters will remember this budget when election time rolls around in 2004.

Meanwhile, the Senate was backed up on its work as Sen. John Kuhn, R-Charleston, filibustered a research and economic development bond bill for hours, cutting into work time. After Democrats refused to agree to the session extension, senators popped up left and right stopping bills.

Senate President Pro Tem Glenn McConnell, R-Charleston, said the logjam would take up so much time that several important bills would not pass this year.

"I think they (legislators) have done what my daddy always said you shouldn't do, which is get mad enough to cost yourself money," McConnell said.

Passage of the .08 DUI legislation came literally in the final minutes of the session. A conference committee of House and Senate members, with the unusual presence of the governor at the table, was still arguing on the tougher drunken driving law with just 40 minutes left in the session.

The House version gave prosecutors too much power, McConnell contended, and was taking away the rights of citizens by giving too much weight to the verdict of a Breathalyzer.

One of the most outspoken proponents of the bill, Rep. JoAnne Gilham, R-Hilton Head, tried to fight off Senate language to weaken the bill by asking the state attorney general to file suit against the U.S. government for mandating the law change; but McConnell refused to back down.

"The Senate's not to blame for this. You sent us a defective bill," McConnell said.

After the 5 p.m. adjournment, House Speaker David Wilkins fired back at Democrats, saying that the General Assembly had devoted a higher

percentage of the state's budget to K-12 education than any other Legislature.

"We made the most out of the limited resources we had available and made K-12 our highest priority," Wilkins said. "Just like families in South Carolina, when we don't have money, we have to make do with less."

The speaker said that with no rosy revenue picture on the horizon, he expected the House to work on "major tax reform" next January.

And Sanford said that campaign finance reform, DMV restructuring and the DUI legislation were good wins for his first legislative session, which he said was good for building the relationships in the Legislature he will need to pass the government restructuring and tax reform initiatives that he stumped for in his campaign.

He dismissed Democrats' charges that he had not been an effective leader. Rep. Doug Jennings, D-Bennettsville, said that "it's ironic that Sanford campaigned against Gov. Hodges for a failure of leadership and then when the going gets tough, put on his shorts and went to Bermuda."

Sanford said that being the first governor in 50 years not to have been a part of state government before his election, there was no way he could come in and bully people around in a state dominated by the Legislature.

"I think it's about relationships at the state level," Sanford said. "Anybody who comes into this system and says that he knows it all is wrong and setting himself up for failure. As a result of work this year, we'll be better positioned for setting priorities in the next session."

Sanford, who may see little incentive for calling lawmakers back to Columbia to override his vetoes, nevertheless said he would consider the option of calling the General Assembly back for special session. But most Statehouse insiders consider that an unlikely option.

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Posted on Thu, Jun. 05, 2003

Legislature approves campaign finance law

JIM DAVENPORT
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Political parties and campaign donors will have to disclose more information under a bill the Legislature approved Thursday just before going home for the year.

Campaign finance law changes were top priorities for legislative leaders and Gov. Mark Sanford who wanted more disclosure.

"I think that's what this whole bill is about is disclosure. Let's find where the money is being spent, who's spending it for what purpose and let everybody know it," House Speaker David Wilkins, R-Greenville, said shortly after ratifying the bill. "Disclosure to me is the key to campaign finance."

Sanford agreed.

"I'm extremely pleased," he said. "It's one of the big items that we laid out in the State of the State and really in our inaugural."

Under the bill headed to Sanford's desk:

- _ Political parties will have to disclose soft money contributions - the money that for years has influenced elections without being reported in detail.

"They've finally come up with more regulation of the parties with the requirement that parties will have to file and disclose everything they receive," State Ethics Commission Executive Director Herb Hayden said.

- _ Political action committees can't transfer money for state campaigns among themselves.

- _ Lobbyists won't be able to give money to PACs.

- _ Lobbyists won't be able to drop their registrations temporarily to raise money for campaigns. If they drop their registrations, they can't register until the next year.

- _ Statewide and General Assembly candidates will have to file campaign finance reports in an electronic format when there's enough money to create that system, Hayden said.

"It's a big step in the right direction," said John Crangle, state director for Common Cause, a Washington-based government watchdog group. "It's a little stronger actually than what we thought we would get out of there."

The soft money disclosures are key, Hayden said.

"The parties have used that soft money for supporting candidates, not directly, but indirectly through

multiple candidate ads ... that is intended to influence the election," Hayden said. "Someone could give ... an unlimited amount of money to the party to be used to get out the Republican vote or get out the Democratic vote without any of that being disclosed because none of it is going to candidates."

Campaign finance bills have floated around the Statehouse for years, typically failing in the Senate. Former Gov. Jim Hodges vetoed similar legislation in November 2000, saying the legislation was unconstitutional and would encourage frivolous lawsuits.

Similar legislation died last year when the Senate adjourned without adopting a compromise version of the bill.

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Posted on Fri, Jun. 06, 2003

Senate toughens DUI rules, ups school aid as session ends

By AARON SHEININ and VALERIE BAUERLEIN
Staff Writers

Lawmakers ended a contentious 2003 legislative session Thursday, using every last minute to toughen DUI rules, reform campaign finance laws, and send \$44 million more to the state's ailing schools.

The flurry of activity capped a legislative session dominated by brutal debate over a shrinking budget and the near-collapse of the Senate's ability to operate. Lawmakers will not return until January, unless Gov. Mark Sanford orders them to.

Among the legislation passed late Thursday was:

- A new DUI law that lowers the legal threshold of "under the influence" to .08 percent blood alcohol content. The current standard is .10. Passage of the bill, which received final approval in the Senate with less than 15 seconds left in the session, means the state will get access to \$66 million in federal highway funds. Sanford supported the tougher standards.
- Campaign finance reform that includes tougher rules for lobbyists, requires political parties to disclose fund raising and calls for electronic filing of campaign finance data. Sanford is expected to sign the bill.
- A one-time, \$44 million boost for education. The House had already approved using a portion of federal money included in the \$350 billion tax cut legislation approved by Congress last month to boost per-pupil spending to just above this year's level. The Senate followed suit Thursday. Sanford supports using the money for education.

The Senate was in near chaos all day, with a few lawmakers obstructing most progress. It began to seem less and less likely that any major measure would find its way to Sanford's desk in the waning hours before the legally mandated 5 p.m. deadline.

But as that hour neared, new compromises were reached and negotiators shuttled back and forth between House and Senate chambers to beat the clock.

One measure that did not pass the Senate, was a resolution authorizing the House and Senate to return in two weeks to deal with the governor's vetoes.

That means any deletion Sanford makes to the \$5 billion state budget would stand until January, when lawmakers return.

Should Sanford make wholesale changes to a specific agency's budget, the Legislature would be unable to overrule him until half-way through the budget year.

Sanford said Thursday he had not decided whether he would order lawmakers back.

The six-month session will be remembered mostly for the budget and the problems in the Senate.

Lawmakers arrived in January to more bleak economic news and the prospect of cutting the budget for the third year in a row. By many estimates, \$500 million in spending had to be cut. The debate centered on how to do that and protect schools and health care for the poor, elderly and disabled.

"This is the worst budget year any of us have ever faced," said House Speaker David Wilkins, R-Greenville, who has been in the House since 1981.

He and other House Republicans claimed credit for dealing with the austere budget while maintaining Medicaid funding and limiting cuts to education.

But Democrats in the House said the Republican majority failed to fund education to the levels required by law. Teachers will be fired and class sizes will increase as a result, said Minority Leader James Smith, D-Richland.

State Superintendent of Education Inez Tenenbaum said that while she is pleased by the General Assembly's "extra effort" to boost school funding, the overall funding picture still disappoints.

"Bear in mind that it's still about \$300 less per pupil than it was two years ago," said Tenenbaum, a Democrat. "I don't want anyone to think the school districts have been held harmless. They have not."

Democrats gave Republicans low marks in health care, education, environment, the budget and other categories. Wilkins said Democrats' only answer to the state's problems was raising taxes.

One final attempt to raise the cigarette tax to provide a stable funding source for Medicaid took place in the Senate in the final moments of the session.

Cigarette tax supporters won a strong but symbolic vote. Senators took a rare "sense of the Senate" vote, saying they supported a 53-cent per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund Medicaid. The vote did not carry the weight of law.

The vote, initiated by Sen. Tommy Moore, D-Aiken, was 27-16, with 10 Republicans voting in favor of the tax. The Senate had fought for six weeks over a cigarette tax to raise \$171 million for the Medicaid program, but failed to reach a compromise.

Sen. Verne Smith, R-Greenville, said he was pleased a cigarette tax passed, even though it was symbolic, "because it showed the vast majority supported it."

He expects the cigarette tax to be reintroduced next year.

For the Legislative Black Caucus, the difficult budget season did produce some positive results.

Rep. Jerry Govan, D-Orangeburg, the caucus chairman, said the biggest success was restoring \$10 million in lottery funding for HOPE and needs-based college scholarships. The House originally cut those as a cost-saving measure. The caucus also successfully pushed for \$3 million in lottery money to go to S.C. State for improvements.

Lawmakers counting on the July 1 start of the 2003-04 fiscal year to bring closure to years of difficult economic news have little to look forward to.

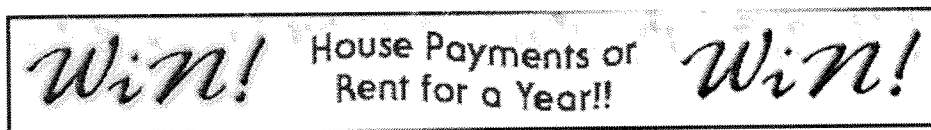
Revenue Department director Burnie Maybank said Thursday that collections of corporate and individual income taxes and sales taxes "were dismal" in May, compared with May 2002.

The tax collections were below state estimates, Maybank said, meaning the budget might not balance when the comptroller general closes the books on the fiscal year in July.

If there is a deficit, money will have to come from reserve funds or agency budgets to balance the books.

Staff writers Jeff Stensland and Lauren Markoe contributed to this report.

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Legislators lower drunken driving standard to .08

Posted Thursday, June 5, 2003 - 8:51 pm

By Tim Smith and Dan Hoover
CAPITAL BUREAU
COLUMBIA — Tempers flared and nerves frayed as lawmakers finished the final day of their legislative session Thursday with passage of campaign finance reform and the lowering of the state's drunken driving level to .08.

The chaotic adjournment came on a sour financial note, as officials disclosed the state's revenue for May was about \$68 million less than May of 2002. Senate leaders said the figures could mean more budget cuts later this year, while House members said they were not as concerned because officials base budget planning on how well collections match estimates.

Lawmakers did not agree to return in any extended session, leaving any possible budget vetoes by Gov. Mark Sanford unanswered until January.

While legislative leaders were pleased at the passage this year of some measures, including predatory lending reform, an overhaul of the Division of Motor Vehicles, and reapportionment, many criticized the session as being too partisan and contentious.

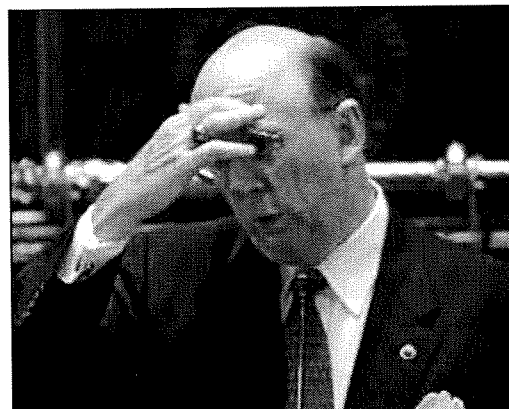
"It's the worst session South Carolina has ever been through," Senate Minority Leader John Land said.

Senate President Pro Tempore Glenn McConnell of Charleston said "anger has gotten in the way of good judgment."

Sen. Darrell Jackson, a Columbia Democrat, said Democrats and Republicans plotted against each other during the session.

"But you know who really gets gotten, the citizens of this state," he said.

House Speaker David Wilkins, however, praised the session for noteworthy legislation during hard financial times.



Speaker of the House David Wilkins, R-Greenville, explains that there is a lot of business to take care of on the last day of the session Thursday at the Statehouse in Columbia. AP/Mary Ann Chastain

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"It was a tough but ultimately productive year," he said.

Not passing Thursday was a \$250 million bond bill for universities and colleges in the state. Sen. John Kuhn, R-Charleston, held up the bill in a filibuster, accusing officials at the state's three research institutions of showing "sheer greed" because all but \$30 million of the money would go to the three schools. Kuhn wanted \$60 million to be divvied among 30 smaller schools.

The drunken-driving legislation almost didn't make it Thursday. House and Senate lawmakers negotiating differences failed to reach agreement until Gov. Mark Sanford helped mediate the discussion.

The resulting agreement was brought to the Senate floor minutes from adjournment and failed to get a vote before House officials entered the chamber for ratification proceedings. But with seconds left, a vote was requested and the compromise passed.

The new measure lowers the level from .10 to .08 and requires testing to be done using state guidelines. The federal government had warned that states not lowering the drunken-driving level this year could see the loss of millions of dollars in highway funds.

Under the campaign finance bill, reporting requirements would be extended to independent groups spending money to influence elections and political parties, which have been exempt from filing.

Also, the bill would require electronic filing by candidates, allowing Internet review of reports by the public.

Sanford said as a result of the bill "more of the money spent in the political process will see the light of day."

High-profile bills were left stalled in the Senate, including legislation to impose more stringent requirements for service on the rate-setting Public Service Commission and make failure to wear a seat belt a primary offense.

In the last hour, the Senate also passed a symbolic vote on raising cigarette taxes, 27-16.

The Senate spent five weeks debating the budget but could never agree on various revenue proposals, including one by Sanford to combine an increase in cigarette taxes with a reduction in income taxes. Democrats have said the failure to raise new revenue has left the state's education system shortchanged.

Sen. Tom Moore, an Aiken Democrat who proposed the symbolic vote Thursday, said Thursday's revenue collection figures, when combined with the spare budget passed this year could lead to financial problems by this fall.

"We have built a gallows very high with a very short rope to hang ourselves," he said afterward.

Senate President Pro Tempore Glenn McConnell of Charleston praised some of the Legislature's accomplishments but criticized the lack of an extended-session bill, a move he said led to an atmosphere in the Senate's final hours of "desperation" as members raced to get bills passed before 5 p.m. He said leaving the governor's vetoes unanswered sets "a dangerous precedent."

"We're engaging in Russian roulette," he said.

But Land said since Republicans are the majority in the Senate and House and Sanford is Republican, "anything he would veto would be within the family. We Democrats don't feel like we should get involved with that."

"I just don't see the need to come back and spend \$75,000 a day to take up vetoes that probably won't get two-thirds vote to override in either chamber," he said.

Democratic members gathered on the Statehouse's north steps during the session's final hours Thursday to denounce a 2003-04 budget presided over by a Republican governor and Legislature.

"They can win campaigns, but they cannot govern," said House Minority Leader James Smith of Columbia.

To illustrate their contention, the Democrats issued a "Republican Majority's 2003 Legislative Accountability Report Card" that gave the GOP majority an "F" on five of seven categories, plus an "F-" on education.

Rep. Jerry Govan, D-Orangeburg, called it "a dramatic image of what is happening in South Carolina."

Sticking with imagery, Smith painted a verbal portrait of fired teachers, bulging classrooms and deteriorating school buildings because of budget cutbacks that reduced per pupil spending to mid-1990's levels.

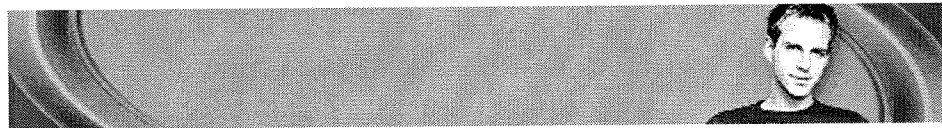
The GOP received a "C" for the passage of anti-predatory lending legislation, but Democrats said they deserved the lion's share of credit for pushing the bill.

Democrats said the Legislature failed to reform Medicaid and establish a stable funding base for it, eroded environment protections, reduced the number of troopers on state roads, and failed to adequately fund essential services while leaving local governments no choice but to raise property taxes.

Sanford and Wilkins rejected the criticism.

"Let there be no mistake," Wilkins responded in a post-adjournment press conference on the House floor, "the only solution was to raise taxes." The comment drew supportive boos from GOP lawmaker arrayed behind him.

Sanford sloughed off Democratic accusations of a lack of executive leadership, saying, he displayed "an appropriate level of involvement and leadership" considering that he never served in the Legislature and knew few of its members when he took office in January.



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Faith opens door to commerce

Leaner, more open agency presented to Lowcountry corporate recruiters

BY JOHN P. MCDERMOTT
Of The Post and Courier Staff

SUMMERVILLE--By the time he wrapped up his face-to-face session with Dorchester County economic development officials Thursday morning, Commerce Secretary Bob Faith had scribbled eight pages of notes into a briefing book.

Along the way, Faith didn't hesitate to interrupt the discussion to pose questions. Jim Friar, economic development director for Dorchester County, was impressed.

"He'd ask, 'What does that mean? How does that affect you? How can we help you with that?'" Friar said. "He listened intently."

Faith, determined to show the state's primary industrial recruitment agency in a more favorable light, took his "Open Door Tour" to Summerville Thursday, discussing goals, obstacles and concerns with corporate recruiters from eight Lowcountry counties.

Steve Dykes, Charleston County's economic development director, said he and Faith talked about the need to raise wages by attracting more high-tech employers to the region.

Dykes was appreciative for an opportunity "to get some face time" with the Commerce chief, a political newcomer who took office in February for all of \$1 a year.

"That can be rare when a guy like that gets into full swing," he said of the one-on-one meeting.

For Faith, a Charleston-based real estate executive, the meetings give him a chance to learn the lay of the land and put faces with names. In addition, they allow him to bring county officials up to date about his plan to shake up Commerce, even as it faces a \$1 million budget cut and a major reorganization.

"I think the message is that it's a team sport," Faith said. "It's not singles tennis. These are lean times and we need each other."

Lean times, indeed. Commerce is moving to cut its overhead expenses by \$1.1 million, or 9 percent, for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Faith said he expects his budget to be cut to \$11.1 million from \$12.2 million.

Already, the agency is tightening its belt by curtailing travel, advertising, marketing, training and expenses. In addition, the agency said last week that it is offering early voluntary retirement packages to 26 of its 130 employees, or 20 percent of its staff.

At the county level, officials said it is too soon to tell how the budget and personnel cuts at Commerce will affect their efforts but that funding certainly is on their minds.

Berkeley County Supervisor Jim Rozier said he and his staff are prepared to work harder. "We have good salesmen," Rozier said.

Friar and Dykes each said they hope the agency does not shrink its project management staff, which works closely with local officials to attract new businesses.

"Like any economic development organization, the level of staffing you have determines how thoroughly you work a project," Friar said.

In any event, he added, "we will make it work."

Faith assured the officials that any "critical" positions at Commerce will not be affected. Also, by combining jobs and giving workers more responsibility, he expects the agency to do more with less.

Aside from coping with budget woes, Faith said he has been able to achieve some key goals.

He said one of his earliest priorities was to dismantle the secretive "culture" at Commerce. In the past, he said, the department often looked for reasons to withhold information about grants and other state incentives that businesses received for creating jobs and investing money. Under Faith, the agency has started voluntarily releasing that information.

"That's something you're going to see a lot more of," he said.

Also, Faith said, the department has put stricter internal financial controls in place to ensure it is a "well-managed enterprise." For instance, as part of the cost-cutting Commerce is rebuilding its budget from scratch, he said.

Meanwhile, all grant and incentive requests are being handled the same way Faith's real estate company approaches a prospective investment. Under the new policy, a "deal advocate" from Commerce must write up a proposal early in the process detailing the potential risk and payoff, he said.

At the same time, Commerce is working on a new long-term strategic plan. When completed later this year, it will be "implemented immediately," Faith said.

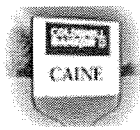
"It really becomes the driver of how we do business at the Department of Commerce," he said.

Faith, who favors a regional approach to economic development, was particularly impressed to learn how Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties formed a unified front to lure business.

"I think the three of them working together really creates a lot of advantages," he said.

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BMW plans for possible growth of 4,000 jobs

Posted Thursday, June 5, 2003 - 9:35 pm

By Rudolph Bell
BUSINESS WRITER
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A highway planning document prepared for the state Commerce Department says BMW is considering adding 4,000 more jobs at its Greer plant, but a BMW spokesman said the figure is for planning only.

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"It's a planning number. It does not mean we're imminently ready to do anything," said Bobby Hitt, spokesman for BMW Manufacturing Corp.

The Greer plant presently employs approximately 4,800 workers.

The number appears in an environmental assessment of plans to build an Interstate 85 interchange next to the BMW plant, at the intersection with Brockman McClimon Road.

BMW requested the \$35 million improvement, and state officials agreed to pay for it after BMW promised — and announced in September — a 400-worker, \$400 million expansion at the local plant.

Money for the interchange would come from a pot of up to \$250 million that lawmakers created last year to encourage major industrial expansions. The Commerce Department and state Department of Transportation are working together on the project.

The planning document says the interchange is needed to accommodate an expansion at the BMW plant "that would add approximately 4,000 new jobs."

"One of the major obstacles to this expansion is the absence of access to I-85 at Brockman McClimon Road," it says.

According to the document, the new interchange would allow BMW to reroute supplier traffic from an existing interchange at State 101, avoiding congestion that has "affected supplier dependability."

"If these conditions continue or worsen, they could jeopardize not only BMW's expansion plans, but also its ability to continue to operate at its current location," the document says.

The document was prepared by Wilbur Smith Associates, a Columbia consulting firm, at the behest of the Commerce and Transportation departments, said Commerce spokeswoman Clare Morris.

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"The state's role, we feel, is to help BMW expand as much as possible," Morris said.

Hitt said BMW supplied the 4,000 jobs figure to Wilbur Smith. He said the plant can't handle additional traffic right now.

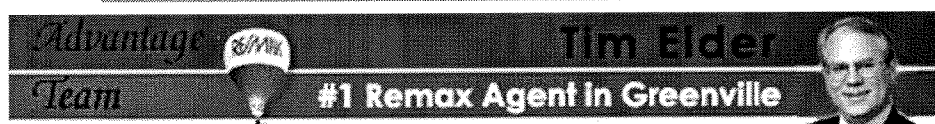
"We can't get any bigger because we can't get anything in and out of here," Hitt said. The situation "would be a show stopper for any further expansion at this site," he said.

Worldwide, BMW is engaged in the most extensive product rollout in its history. The company hopes to be selling 1.4 million light vehicles a year by 2008 — a 40 percent increase.

In February of 2001, BMW asked state environmental regulators for permission to more than double the number of vehicles it was then making at the Greer plant.

In its application for a 10-year air-quality permit from the state Department of Health and Environmental Control, BMW outlined plans for a second manufacturing plant and as many as 10,000 workers at its Greer campus within a decade.

At the time, Hitt said the application reflected a "best case" scenario at the plant over the next 10 years.



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MyrtleBeachOnline.com

Posted on Fri, Jun. 06, 2003

THE SUN NEWS

EDITORIAL

Boeing Boggles the Mind**Aircraft factory would change Strand forever - mostly for the better**

If you want to attract a private employer that would buoy the local and state economy beyond initial comprehension, you can't do better than the Boeing Co. The prospect that an S.C. community could assemble the company's new 7E7 airliner should quicken pulses statewide, as the economic benefits would ripple across the state and Southeast.

If Horry County can pull off its bid to site the Boeing plant at Myrtle Beach International Airport, the face and nature of our community would change forever. We would still be a prime tourism venue. But to that economic mainstay would be added a cornucopia of new jobs - and we're not just talking more than 1,000 high-paying factory jobs.

It's reasonable to estimate that each new factory job would generate six or more new jobs of other kinds:

The ancillary jobs necessary to support the factory and to handle subcontracts from Boeing - for airplane cabinetry and upholstery, perhaps; indeed, the typical Boeing factory spawns numerous small service and manufacturing companies to handle work the company doesn't want to do.

Health care workers to handle the additional preventive care, injury mitigation and emergency care burden a factory that provides employee health benefits would generate.

Teaching and support jobs at the school district, Horry-Georgetown Technical College and possibly Coastal Carolina University, to handle worker training and prepare local students for technical and mechanical work.

Construction jobs to build the factory and to build the homes factory workers inevitably would buy.

Service and retail jobs to handle the added food, lodging and retail demand a large new payroll would generate.

Local government jobs to handle the added pressure and growth such a factory would generate.

Lawyers, real estate, insurance and other financial services jobs to deal with all the money that would come into the community.

And those are just the ones we can think of off the tops of our heads. We invite readers to imagine more.

Better still, a Boeing factory in our midst would exert huge downward pressure on residential taxes - though not necessarily because of the factory itself. The county probably would have to create a multicounty business park or invoke some other tax-abatement scheme to tempt Boeing to locate here.

The additional tax benefits would come from the residential-commercial real estate boom that inevitably would accompany the factory and from the additional sales-tax revenue a large new payroll generates. Worker and executive income taxes would help our financially sick state government get well in a hurry.

Indeed, when you start imagining how nicely a Grand Strand Boeing facility would fit in around here, the mind boggles. Some negatives would accompany such a facility, not least noise and added traffic congestion, but the positives would outweigh them by far.

Sure, attracting such a plant would be a stretch for our community.

But a Grand Strand bid for the plant boosts chances that some S.C. venue could land it. It gives the S.C. Department of Commerce, which is coordinating S.C. bids, an extra card to play. And if the Strand is able to get the plant, so much the better. But no one should pretend our community would ever be the same.

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Posted on Fri, Jun. 06, 2003

Sluggish economy reason for layoffs in Denmark

Associated Press

DENMARK, S.C. - A sluggish economy has forced one of Bamberg County's largest employers to layoff 34 people this week, a company official says.

NIBCO, which makes plastic plumbing fittings, had employed about 200 people, plant manager Mike Kegler said.

"The short- to medium-term view for our markets requires a sustained focus on cost reductions at our facility," Kegler said.

The number of employees was cut because the company has had less workload, he said.

The NIBCO facility has been in Denmark since 1985. The plant runs a large injection molding operation that produces PVC and CPVC plastic plumbing fittings.

NIBCO has 12 manufacturing plants throughout the United States and in Mexico and Poland.

Information from: The Times & Democrat

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Posted on Thu, Jun. 05, 2003

Many would like to have seen S.C. schools get more money

Associated Press

Even as legislators packed up Thursday and prepared to adjourn for the year, some residents said they still were unhappy with the lack of funding for public schools in South Carolina.

"The children are our future. If we don't educate them, they won't be able to get a job," said Suzanne Robinson, a 62-year-old middle school teacher from Columbia. Robinson said she supported a proposal to raise the sales tax by 2 cents on the dollar to better fund education.

She wasn't alone in her willingness to pay more.

Henry Isaac, 53, of Columbia supported a half-cent increase in the sales tax to help schools, saying an amount that small probably wouldn't even be noticed.

"Education is worth it as an investment in our future," he said. "And I think smokers should also pay an additional tax."

Early on this year, several tax-increase proposals floated around the Statehouse, but in the end legislators decided to make cuts within other agencies and use millions of federal dollars in order to make ends meet in the classroom.

The final \$5.3 billion state budget - approved just three days ago - allows public schools to spend \$1,701 per student, about \$500 less than the state budget board's research division recommended.

Isaac, who works in insurance and real estate, said he became angrier as the budget battle dragged into this week.

"It's just money wasted to take as long as they did," he said. "And then they end up cutting education the way they did, it's just not right."

Earle Kirkley, 56, of Forest Acres also said he wished the Legislature would get its work done faster.

"If they need money, I'd be happy to take up a collection for them," said Kirkley, an artist.

Jesse Logsdon, a 21-year-old college student from Columbia, said more funding should go to elementary and secondary schools. "The school system is horrible here," he said.

When you have "big bucks" going into the schools, students have a solid base for a good college education and can get high-paying jobs, strengthening the economy, he said.

Nathalie Gregg, 38, of Columbia also said South Carolina needs to improve education because businesses don't want to locate to the state and she's willing to pay more in taxes if necessary.

Logsdon, a smoker, said he supports a cigarette tax and would like to see the revenue go to health care. "We're the people who are going to need health care in the future," he said.

A 53-cent-per-pack tax increase on cigarettes was one of the proposals that got a lot of attention earlier this year. The money would have been earmarked for Medicaid programs that serve many poor and elderly South Carolinians.

"I don't mind them raising the taxes on cigarettes as long as it's fair," Kirkley said while sitting outside a coffee shop, smoking a cigarette.

Columbia geologist John Pray, 44, disagreed with the cigarette tax plan. "They shouldn't single out a group of people. If you're talking about health costs, obesity is more of a concern," he said.

Jack Abroscat, 54, of Surfside Beach said he didn't think any tax increase would be welcomed along the coast.

Abroscat, who moved to South Carolina about 13 years ago, ran a deli on the Grand Strand and is about to open a street vending business in Georgetown.

"The problem down here, because there is such a large retiree population, anything about new taxes is not going to fly," he said, although he would be willing to pay higher taxes if they money went to education.

Mary Powers, 54, of Arcadia Lakes, said the Legislature did a poor job funding education. "You either pay now or you pay later," the high school teacher said.

"I feel the lottery money hasn't gone where it was supposed to," Powers said, referring to the South Carolina Education Lottery that began in January 2002. The lottery was sold to voters as a way to pay for college scholarships and other university needs.

Pray said schools could be better funded if lottery revenue went toward elementary and secondary education, rather than college scholarships.

Schools picked up some extra money from the lottery for the fiscal year that begins July 1, including \$8 million for much-needed buses and \$40 million for elementary reading, math, science and social studies programs.

Others disagreed.

"What is going on with the lottery? I think is should go for what most people voted it for," said Janice Cohen, 38, of Columbia, who is the volunteer coordinator for Sistercare Inc. "I just don't like the education lottery. It sounds like we're gambling with education."

Some residents think legislators were in a no-win situation with the sagging economy.

"I think they did the best that they could with the resources they had," said Gregg, executive director of the Capital Senior Center.

Rosanne O'Rear, 62, runs a gift shop on Front Street in downtown Georgetown and said she hadn't paid as much attention to the Legislature this year as she would have liked. "There has been too much else going on. Everyone has been focused on Iraq," she said.

But O'Rear offered some advice for state lawmakers.

"Just get partisan politics out of it and trim the budget as much as you can," she said.

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Posted on Fri, Jun. 06, 2003

The State

Changing time for PACT exam is good solution

STATE EDUCATION Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum has moved to end the roiling legislative debate over school start dates in South Carolina. Ms. Tenenbaum has pledged that her department will hold the state Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test the second week in May, beginning with the 2004-2005 school year. This satisfies a number of interests in the school calendar fight without stripping local districts of their authority to set their own schedules.

PACT has become the linchpin for the school calendar. While that has raised the ire of some, it is appropriate. South Carolina moved in 1998 to a standards-and-accountability system for public schools. If we don't have measuring sticks, we won't know whether students are mastering the material they are expected to learn. A major change in this new system is that all students statewide are expected to be taught to the same uniform -- and, frankly, higher -- standard. This change became even more important when Congress followed up with a national accountability law in 2003. High-stakes, year-end testing is here to stay. Our school calendars must be crafted to give our students the best potential for success on these important measures.

Conflict arose when that goal ran up against local community desires and economic reality. School districts around the Upstate and the Midlands began opening their doors earlier each year in order to get as many days completed as possible before testing. In coastal areas that are economically dependent on tourist dollars, schools generally opened their doors later, around Labor Day.

The tourism industry has pushed for that later opening time to be mandated statewide. And many parents have told local school leaders they are tired of the erosion of summer as school opening dates have crept closer to the first of August. Those issues certainly must be considered as each local school district crafts its schedule. However, the one-size-fits-all mandates being pushed down from the state on this matter were inappropriate. In response, individual legislative delegations began seeking exemptions for their counties, compounding the waste of time and effort over this whole debate. While it is right to let local school boards set their own opening and closing dates as well as holidays and in-service time, the hodgepodge of local bills required to keep that authority hardly represents a good use of the Legislature's time.

Superintendent Tenenbaum's action takes a more practical approach at this point and acknowledges another reality in our schools. These days, once the two weeks of PACT are over, the business part of school essentially ends. This change in test scheduling pushes it to the absolute end of the academic year for many districts, which close by Memorial Day.

Numerous policies and mandates are being forced on our schools by federal and state changes. These lofty ideals meet reality in the individual classrooms of neighborhood schools. Decisions about which days those classroom doors open must consider uniquely local needs. We hope this PACT scheduling change allows this system to remain strong.



School funding woes met with criticisms

Associated Press

Even as legislators packed up Thursday and prepared to adjourn for the year, some residents said they still were unhappy with the lack of funding for public schools in South Carolina.

"The children are our future. If we don't educate them, they won't be able to get a job," said Suzanne Robinson, a 62-year-old middle schoolteacher from Columbia. She said she supported a proposal to raise the sales tax by 2 cents on the dollar to better fund education.

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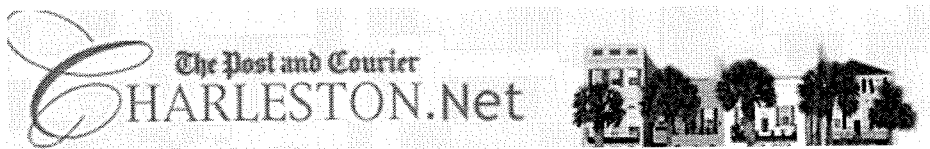
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Lottery not just for scholarships

In the last round of negotiations over how to spend South Carolina's lottery revenues, funding was restored to elementary school programs, as recommended by the House. That decision reflects a welcome recognition of the importance of bolstering education in the early grades, particularly reading. The figure for supplemental programs at elementary schools now stands at \$40 million.

The amount is still far less than that for lottery-based scholarships, tuition grants and loans, currently about \$96.5 million. Yet some legislators continue to insist that scholarships should be receiving more money to the exclusion of other purposes.

Sen. John Land, for example, told our reporter that lottery revenue was never intended for any purpose but scholarships. The Senate Democratic leader went on to say that average students should benefit most from lottery scholarships, with need-based HOPE scholarships and free technical school tuition.

Truthfully, scholarships to average students based on need would be more accurately defined as grants.

Sen. Land's remarks notwithstanding, the language of the referendum question for the lottery allows revenue to be used for any educational purpose that the Legislature determines. Former Gov. Jim Hodges may have based his pitch for the lottery on scholarships, but the referendum language placed no such restriction on its use.

Increasingly, House members have come to recognize the importance of preparing students for higher education. Supplemental reading programs in the early grades are key to improving the foundation for education achievement in middle and high school and eventually in college.

Putting additional money into K-5 should help the state raise the standard of achievement at the beginning of a student's schooling.

The budget crisis convinced legislators to provide flexibility to public schools in the use of lottery money last year, and for the next fiscal year. Practically, that means K-5 programs may not get the funding envisioned by their advocates in the Legislature, at least through next year. When general revenues return to an appropriate level, the Legislature should insist that lottery funds be used strictly for supplemental programs that will bolster achievement levels. The money for K-5 shouldn't be lost in the mix of school funds, used for general operating expenses.



Posted on Thu, Jun. 05, 2003

Sanford signs DMV reform into law

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Drivers will see the first changes in the Division of Motor Vehicles come Saturday, when six offices will be open throughout the state.

The Saturday opening is just one of several major changes coming after Gov. Mark Sanford signed a bill Thursday to make the division of the Public Safety Department a stand-alone agency that answers to his office.

Sanford also named Marcia Adams of Irmo to serve as acting director of the DMV. Adams has served as principal administrator of the agency for the past four years. Her appointment must be confirmed by the Senate.

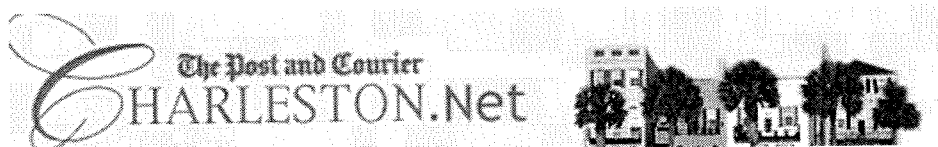
Under the law, drivers could get tag renewal stickers and registrations from county treasurers' offices or private entities that could charge a service fee more than the standard \$24 for the transaction.

Drivers' license expiration dates would be extended from five to 10 years for most people. The agency also can contract with public and private entities to administer driving tests.

The law takes effect immediately and offices in Aiken, Charleston, Florence, Greenville, Irmo and Rock Hill will be open 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. this Saturday and each Saturday through August except July 5 and Aug. 30.

Also beginning this summer, the DMV Web site will offer driver records, points status and pending registration information as well as a service that will allow people to pay their driver's license reinstatement fees online.

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Sanford signs bill to put DMV reform in gear

Measure makes much-maligned agency answerable to governor

BY BRIAN HICKS AND STEVE REEVES
Of The Post and Courier staff

If there was an audience for Gov. Mark Sanford's comments after signing the Division of Motor Vehicles reform bill into law Thursday, it might well have been Thomas Cory of Forest Hills in North Charleston.

Cory's wife had lost her license and needed a replacement. So the couple spent more than two hours waiting around the Leeds Avenue DMV for her name to be called. The lines seemed to stretch on forever.

As far as he was concerned, it's about time somebody did something about service at the notoriously slow state agency.

"They need to speed up somehow," he said. "We went to the Air Force base yesterday to get my wife a new I.D. card. It went much faster there -- boom, boom, boom -- and they were done."

That's a gripe politicians have been hearing for years, but they also sense an opportunity: Whoever can take credit for fixing the DMV stands to gain a political windfall. As Cory put it, "The DMV deals with the public a lot more than other state agencies."

Such sentiments fit in well with Sanford's idea of running the state more like a Wal-Mart.

"For too long, DMV has been the poster child for what doesn't work in state government," Sanford said Thursday. "It's the perfect example of good, hard-working people doing the best they can but operating within a fundamentally flawed system."

The process of fixing that system began long ago, but the change has been pronounced in recent weeks. Sanford's executive order last month instituted new customer service policies and set in motion an Internet-based system for handling certain transactions. Another aspect of that order, weekend business hours at selected offices, will be implemented starting this week. In the Lowcountry, the Leeds Avenue office will handle Saturday business.

This year's DMV reform bill grew out of a task force appointed by Sanford before he took office, but several of its recommendations reflected the findings of a 2002 ad hoc DMV committee led by Rep. John Graham Altman III, R-Charleston.

The bill Sanford signed Thursday takes the DMV out from under the Department of Public Safety and establishes it as a standalone agency answering directly to the governor.

Sanford named Marcia Adams of Irmo to serve as acting director of the DMV.

Adams has served as principal administrator of the agency for the past four years. Her appointment must be confirmed by the Senate.

The law, which takes effect immediately, decentralizes some DMV functions.

Drivers soon will be able to get tag renewal stickers and registrations from county treasurers' offices or private entities that could charge a service fee beyond the standard \$24 for the transaction.

Drivers' license expiration dates would be extended from five to 10 years for most people. The agency also can contract with public and private entities to administer driving tests.

Democrats in the Statehouse expressed some skepticism.

Senate Minority Leader John Land said the problem with the DMV has not been the structure, but the Republican-dominated Legislature's failure to properly fund the agency.

"DMV is in the shape it's in because it's never been properly funded," Land said. "You can't do anything without the money to operate."

Sanford called it the beginning of meaningful change in the beleaguered agency, but he and Adams urged people to not expect change overnight.

"Will the lines be immediately cleared at DMV? No. But this is where the progress starts," Sanford said.

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Posted on Fri, Jun. 06, 2003

State officials say abuse of vulnerable adults is increasing

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults is a growing concern in South Carolina, social services workers say.

Reports of abuse and neglect of people in nursing homes and other institutional settings has increased about 25 percent in the past three years, said John Cook, long-term care ombudsman with the Department of Health and Human Services

"We had 5,000 complaints over the past year," Cook said.

Vulnerable adults include the elderly and people dependent on others because of developmental or physical handicaps.

"I think we have a sleeping giant of a problem when it comes to adult protective services," said Fred Washington, director of Beaufort County's Department of Social Services. "A lot of older people are moving into the state, away from relatives and support systems. The opportunities for exploitation and abuse are increasing."

Between March 2002 and March 2003, about 75 cases involving suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults in a home setting were reported to Washington's office. That's an increase of 38 percent.

Caseworkers determined more than half the reports were warranted.

Reports in York County during the same period jumped 40 percent from 122 to 171, said York County DSS Director Kay Carter.

People are less likely to report suspicions of abuse or neglect involving adults than cases involving children, Carter and Washington say.

The York and Beaufort numbers involving suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults in a home setting differ from the most recent state figures.

A 2002 report from DSS showed a 13 percent decrease in the number of reported adult abuse or neglect cases in home settings.

Teresa Arnold, governmental affairs director for DSS, said the drop in state numbers could represent a reduction in outreach and public education because of staff reductions.

The number of adult protective services employees has dropped from 375 to 261 since 1999 because of state budget cuts, Arnold said.

About 6.5 percent of cases in York County involve actual abuse and 9 percent involve financial exploitation, Carter said.

Information from: The Herald

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Senator blocks bill carrying \$79M, culinary program for local colleges

BY BRIAN HICKS
Of The Post and Courier Staff

COLUMBIA--In the waning hours of the legislative session, state Sen. John Kuhn killed a measure that included almost \$79 million for Charleston colleges and universities, plus a culinary arts program for Trident Tech, with his filibuster of an infrastructure bond bill.

Kuhn's last-day dramatics took center stage on the Senate floor for about three hours as the Charleston Republican argued that the bill's funding formula was flawed and that bonds were no way to spend money in tough budget times.

Besides costing colleges and universities throughout South Carolina \$250 million, the move cost Kuhn the last vestiges of cordiality with some Charleston lawmakers, who slammed him for derailing programs they'd been working on for a year.

Rep. Bobby Harrell, R-Charleston, even attempted a last-minute move to slip the bond bill through on other legislation. Kuhn held up that up, too.

"Senator Kuhn has violated one of the biggest rules of the Charleston County legislative delegation," said state Rep. David Mack, D-North Charleston. "We might fight like cats and dogs, but when it comes to bringing money home, we always stick together."

Kuhn's fellow Republicans were just as hard, if not harder, on the first-term lawmaker, saying they could not believe his stance. Lawmakers had hoped that the scientific research and economic development infrastructure bond bill would help attract major companies such as Boeing to South Carolina and fund a biotech business incubator.

The bill included \$73 million for a Medical University of South Carolina research building, \$2.1 million for The Citadel, \$2.9 million for the College of Charleston and \$1.2 million for Trident Technical College, plus authorization for the school to start a four-year culinary arts program to fill the void left by the pending departure of Johnson and Wales University.

"I'm terribly disappointed that Senator Kuhn allowed that entire list of things to be lost," said Harrell, who saw the legislation pass the House a month ago. "It's incredibly frustrating. If we don't get that culinary arts program up and running (with the loss of Johnson and Wales), it's going to hurt the restaurants

that make us one of the best dining cities in the country."

Kuhn said he didn't think that the Legislature should, in a budget crisis, pass such a monstrous spending bill on the last day of the session and that the funding formula gave too much money to the big research universities and too little to smaller colleges.

He said the fact that lawmakers rejected his proposed amendment means that in actuality they killed the bond bill.

"They have no one to blame but themselves. The blood is on their hands," Kuhn said. "I didn't want the bill but was willing to compromise, but they wouldn't. I do not believe in the middle of an economic crisis is a good time to blow \$250 million for any project, let alone higher education. Despite that, I was willing to compromise."

But Charleston lawmakers said there was more on Kuhn's mind during their discussions with him Thursday. In addition to trying to change the funding formulas, they said, Kuhn suggested he might be willing to drop his opposition to the bond bill if the House would pass his school governance structure bill.

Kuhn's bill called for Charleston County school board members to be elected from nine, single-member districts in partisan elections while taking away the powers of the eight constituent boards and giving the superintendent more power. Support for the bill fell apart in the House over several components of his proposal, prompting angry words between Kuhn and other lawmakers.

The recriminations re-emerged Thursday.

"If John Kuhn thinks I'm going to support his bill that would force busing in schools for racial purposes, he can just filibuster until hell freezes over," said Rep. John Graham Altman III, R-West Ashley.

Kuhn confirmed that his school bill came up in negotiations Thursday, but he said he was more interested in the funding formula.

Rep. Jim Merrill, R-Daniel Island, called Kuhn's move "unconscionable," and Rep. Chip Limehouse, R-Charleston, said the \$73 million to MUSC alone would have circulated through the community seven or eight times.

MUSC President Dr. Ray Greenberg said the school was counting on the bill's passage today.

"It would have had a tremendous economic impact on Charleston County," Greenberg said. "We were certainly hoping it would pass this legislative cycle."

There is no chance of passing the bill before next year, but some senators said even then the package may not garner much support.

Sen. Robert Ford, D-Charleston, said some senators thought the bill gave too much money to the research universities while doling out only \$30 million to the other 27 colleges in the state. Kuhn wanted that figure doubled, Ford said, but some senators wanted it quadrupled.

Ford blasted his colleagues for not compromising with Kuhn.

"Compromise is part of politics, just like apple pie and Chevrolet is America," Ford said. "We couldn't support that formula, not when we're spending other people's money."

MUSC had hoped to use the \$73 million to help alleviate a shortage of research space on campus. The university wanted to use some of it to pay part of the cost of the Children's Research Institute currently under construction.

Dr. John Raymond, MUSC's provost, said the university can finish the institute without the funds, largely through philanthropy and grants, but doing so will be a struggle.

"We're going to scrape by until we get the money," he said.

The university also planned to use some of the \$73 million as matching funds to build an entirely new research building devoted to neurosciences, an area of growing strength at MUSC. In addition, the university wanted to start planning the construction of another facility.

College of Charleston officials did not comment directly on the filibuster Thursday.

"We were hopeful for some regulatory relief and that didn't happen in this session," said Daniel Dukes, senior vice president for governmental affairs at College of Charleston.

Mary Thornley, president of Trident Technical College, said the bill's failure was a "great disappointment." Though the school lost about \$1.2 million in deferred maintenance funds, she said the biggest disappointment is that the defeat means at least a six-month delay for the four-year culinary arts program.

The Citadel was surprised by the move, but didn't immediately know what it would mean for the college.

"With the cuts in the state budget, the loss of any money that would have been coming to the college is cause for concern," said spokeswoman Charlene Gunnells. "Everything is tight."

Harrell, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, moved to attach the measure to a technical bill that simply allowed lottery scholarship holders to transfer grade point averages between schools. Because that legislation already had passed the Senate, all the House had to do was attach the

amendment and get the Senate to concur.

Kuhn also blocked that move.

Harrell, one of the architects of the bill, said the proposal had been in the works for months and changing the funding formula at the last minute was out of the question. As for the argument about taking no money as opposed to a larger share, he said that was a matter of perspective.

"We'll let the people decide," Harrell said. "When the people hear what he's cost Charleston, we'll see what they say."

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Greenville Tech may raise tuition for fall

Posted Thursday, June 5, 2003 - 9:29 pm

By Paul Alongi
STAFF WRITER
palongi@greenvillenews.com

Greenville Technical College president Tom Barton says the school is struggling with a \$5 million state budget cut, and a tuition hike for fall semester may be inevitable.

He said he expects students' final cost for fall to be \$360 to \$440, if they qualify for lottery-funded tuition assistance. In the spring semester, lottery funds brought the cost of tuition and fees down to as little as \$27.

"Yes, we have problems," Barton said. "We're just like anyone else."

It would be the school's second tuition increase this year. Greenville Tech raised tuition earlier this year from \$996 to \$1,125. Summer session students with lottery assistance are paying \$324 for tuition and fees.

Yolanda Cohen, a nursing student who works two jobs, said she's already taking out student loans, and higher tuition would only increase her debt.

"It's hard for me because I'm a single parent," she said.

Latoya Williams, 27, of Greenville, reacted with some surprise after learning there may be another tuition hike this fall.

"That's not going to be good," she said. "I'll be paying anyway. I need my education."


After finishing Tech, she said she plans to attend South Carolina State in Orangeburg and will eventually become a social worker.

Jonathan Morrees, 23, of Pickens, said he is a full-time machinist who attends school part time. He said that if the tuition goes any higher, he may be better off transferring to a university.

"I think it would be better to go to a four-year school," said Morrees, an accounting



Latoya Williams, 27, of Greenville says another tuition hike is "not going to be good." (JASON PARKER/Staff)

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major.

State maximums would allow Greenville Tech to raise tuition up to 21 percent, or \$303, said Lawrence Ray, spokesman for the state Technical College System. Tuition can't go any higher than \$1,428, he said.

State Rep. Ronald Townsend, R-Anderson, said Greenville Tech's tuition increase seems excessive, even with the budget cuts the Legislature passed this week.

"People need to realize that the lottery isn't going to continue to pay the cost of education — unless more people start playing," said Townsend, chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee.

Questions remain about how much lottery-funded tuition assistance each student will receive this fall. But it's expected to change little from its current level, Ray said. Summer students are eligible for \$876 each.

The amount has ranged from \$462 to \$1,044 since its debut last fall. The number has fluctuated with education officials' estimates of how many students would take advantage of the program.

Lottery assistance is widely available to state residents because eligibility guidelines allow most applicants to qualify. Rather than maintain a specific grade-point average, students must make "reasonable progress" toward a degree, certificate or diploma.

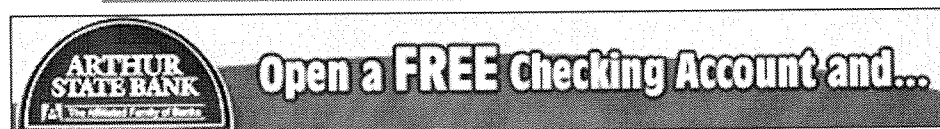
The tuition hike would come as technical colleges grapple with state budget cuts. The \$5.3 billion spending plan passed by the Legislature this week would hit Greenville Tech for about \$5 million, Barton said.

He said the college has raised class sizes, left positions unfilled and relied more heavily on part-time faculty to save money.

Technical colleges have been cut 17 percent over the fiscal year, Ray said. That includes the 9.88 percent cut in the Legislature's most recent spending plan, he said.

Paul Alongi can be reached at 298-4746.

Staff Writer E. Richard Walton contributed to this report.



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Posted on Thu, Jun. 05, 2003

Clemson shares \$9.8 million textile research grant with seven schools

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Clemson University, along with seven other universities, will receive nearly \$10 million in federal money to research new textile technologies, South Carolina lawmakers said Thursday.

The U.S. Department of Commerce awarded \$9.78 million to the National Textile Center, an eight-university center that researches ways to improve the long-term global competitiveness of the U.S. textile and apparel industry, said U.S. Rep. Fritz Hollings, D-S.C.

The grant will be used to develop new materials and improve manufacturing, Hollings said.

"Our textile industry has been hard hit by unfair, foreign competition," said U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. "We've lost tens of thousands of jobs over the past decade."

Clemson is a founding member of the center, which also includes Auburn University, Georgia Institute of Technology, North Carolina State University, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Philadelphia University, Cornell University and the University of California Davis.

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S.C. recognized for role in desegregation

Associated Press

COLUMBIA--Half a century ago, South Carolinians played a crucial role in the desegregation of public schools.

Today, a descendant of those pioneers says vigilance is needed to make sure the commemoration of the 1954 Supreme Court ruling outlawing separate schools for blacks and whites is open to all.

"It's going to be difficult because people don't want to talk about it, especially in the white community," said Joseph A. DeLaine Jr., whose father helped file a lawsuit in Clarendon County that became one of five leading to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education*.

DeLaine, who represents South Carolina on a commission planning for the May 17, 2004, anniversary, said it is important to remind the people across the country about South Carolina's role in challenging school segregation.

"It's critical that we know where this started," he said. "We want to reach states that are not included in this."

To coordinate anniversary activities, Congress created the panel, which met in South Carolina on Wednesday as part of a five-stop tour of the locations where the lawsuits originated. They are planning a series of public lectures and writing contests about the *Brown* case next year.

Some panel members said they were concerned the information was not being distributed fairly or teachers were not aware of events.

DeLaine said materials about the events weren't getting to all schools in South Carolina.

The commission also toured historical sites in Clarendon County and met with plaintiffs and descendants of plaintiffs in the *Briggs v. Elliott* lawsuit, which was combined with four others from Virginia, Delaware, Kansas and Washington, D.C.

Carolyn Sawyer, who also represents South Carolina on the panel, said she is working with Gov. Mark Sanford to help observe the anniversary.

The project will look at education, economic status, civil justice, participation in public life and the status of family, said Fred Sheheen, project coordinator at the university's Institute of Public Service and Policy Research.

"Our ultimate goal is to provide our state's policy-makers with well documented research, statistical information and sound public policy recommendations that can improve the status of African-Americans in South Carolina during the next 50 years and beyond," Sheheen said.

Other events include an exhibition at the university museum focusing on the DeLaine family.

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Collins testifies he never used video gambling machines

Associated Press

COLUMBIA--Video gambling businessman Fred Collins says he never played the games that made him rich, and he never knew whether his machines were involved in illegal payouts.

Collins, whose company once owned about one in every six video gambling machines in South Carolina, testified for most of the day Wednesday in a federal trial pitting him against seven people who said they were addicted to gambling and the machines ruined their lives.

The seven plaintiffs are seeking substantial damages, said Larry Richter, one of their lawyers. The lawsuit has bounced between state and federal courts for about six years.

Collins was the only one not to settle out of 48 people sued by the group of gambling addicts. The plaintiffs say Collins and his employees violated fair trade practices and other laws by advertising and paying out jackpots bigger than the \$125 per day limit set by state law.

Video gambling was banned in South Carolina three years ago.

Collins twice denied allegations that he knew whether illegal jackpots were paid at his locations. He also denied that Collins Entertainment Co. Inc. advanced money to businesses to cover jackpots.

"We trained their staff how to operate the machines lawfully," Collins said.

His company took steps to ensure that video gamblers were not paid more than the law allowed, including placing stickers on machines, Collins said.

He also denied the company tried to cover up illegal cash payments and said he has never sat down and played the games.

"I've tinkered with them and toyed with them, but I haven't played one," Collins said. "If I really wanted to know how, I could read the instructions and learn in 15 minutes."

Collins, 68, of Greenville, testified he shepherded the video gambling industry in South Carolina, beginning in the early 1970s.

"Pac-Man made my company, but video poker made me rich," Collins said.

The jury trial before chief U.S. District Judge Joe Anderson started Tuesday. As many as three dozen witnesses might testify, and the trial could last several weeks.

Former Republican Gov. David Beasley, a staunch opponent of video gambling, testified Tuesday for the plaintiffs.

Beasley has blamed his re-election defeat in 1998 on video gambling businessmen like Collins pouring millions of dollars into the campaign of Democrat Jim Hodges.

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Phone fees law worries city leaders

N. Charleston, Charleston fear million-dollar loss

BY JASON HARDIN

Of The Post and Courier Staff

Some phone customers could save money under a state law set to take effect next year, but South Carolina municipalities are howling, saying the measure could cost them more than a million dollars annually.

A bill was making its way through the General Assembly to address the cities' concerns, but that bill stalled and died for the year Thursday, the last day of the session.

The law, passed in 1999, adjusts the amount of fees municipalities can charge telecommunication companies. Some traditional phone users could pay less, while some cell phone users could pay more, but cities say the new limit will not allow them to bring in as much money as before.

A second issue, however, has municipalities far more concerned. It involves an interpretation of the law that could slice the fees dramatically and cost cities across the state a hefty chunk of money.

The Lowcountry's biggest cities, Charleston and North Charleston, each could lose a million dollars annually, city officials said.

North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey said Thursday that the interpretation question came up unexpectedly, and if it is not resolved in the cities' favor, his city will face tough choices.

The potential loss could amount to about 2 percent of the city's already tight budget, he said.

"I would either have to raise taxes ... or cut services to the public," he said.

Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. said the idea four years ago was that rates would be adjusted to even the playing field between the traditional phone industry and the proliferating cell phone industry. Municipalities were not supposed to be hurt by the change, he said.

"We were disappointed that the telecommunication industry and BellSouth resisted this," Riley said. "I feel that they broke what was an understanding that we had four years ago, that the system would be made whole."

Riley said the state's Board of Economic Advisors is interpreting the law in a way that would hurt cities across the state. The issue of the interpretation

boiled over in Columbia on Thursday as municipalities struggled to alter the law.

Sen. Tommy Moore, D-Aiken, was trying to amend the law because he said there was a flaw in the economic board's formula. He said it could cause municipalities to receive only a tenth of the money they have been receiving.

The Senate passed the change, but the House buried it in its Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee, killing the measure for the year. Rep. Harry Cato, R-Travelers Rest and the committee's chairman, said Moore and municipalities really want to set the collection rate at 1.25 percent of businesses' gross revenues instead of the 0.75 percent in the law that will take effect next year.

The state allows cities and towns to levy a fee against companies that use the right of way for their phone lines. The fee varies from town to town but has generally been 3 percent of the customer's charge for phone service.

Wireless and long-distance companies, which don't need to use the right of way, haven't paid such fees, or they've paid 0.3 percent.

Customers pay these franchise fees through an additional charge on their telephone bill.

This charge appears on the bill along with federal and state taxes. Its size depends on where residents live and how much they use the phone, but it's usually small. Ted Creech, regional director of BellSouth and a Summerville resident, said his fee amounted to 56 cents last month.

The General Assembly decided to change state law in 1999 to standardize this fee across the state. Under the change, cities can charge any kind of telecommunications company -- including wireless, long-distance and paging companies -- 0.75 percent of the customer's charge.

The change is set to go into effect Jan. 1. Phone company officials on Thursday said they knew of no reason why that shouldn't happen, especially since municipalities were in agreement four years ago.

"That formula was discussed, reviewed and agreed upon in 1999," said J.D. Pate, executive director of the S.C. Telephone Association.

"This is a revenue-neutral situation for us," Creech said. "We don't stand to lose or gain any direct revenue. The objective of the law is to make sure that customers of all telecom providers are being taxed in the same manner for the same rate. It's a leveling of that playing field."

Riley said cities will push for legislative changes next year and for a different interpretation of the law in the meantime. He said if the city is deprived of the fees, it will increase pressure on property taxes.



Posted on Fri, Jun. 06, 2003

Clyburn to speak on black colleges

U.S. representative will host conference on state of institutions

By JOHN C. DRAKE
Staff Writer

Historically black colleges and universities have been so underfunded that they are having trouble meeting their students' needs and attracting new ones, U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn said.

The state of black colleges is the focus of a daylong conference in Charleston today that Clyburn is hosting with members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

College and university presidents, along with government and business leaders, will discuss the challenges facing the schools in a series of panel discussions.

"I want us, when we leave there, to be on one accord when it relates to what the missions of these schools are," Clyburn, D-Columbia, said.

Improving historically black colleges and universities has become one of the congressman's top issues.

This year, Clyburn pushed legislation through Congress that allotted some \$60 million to restore historic buildings on the campuses.

But he said schools must provide 30 percent matching funds to help pay for the restorations in order to receive the money.

"So we've got to develop and coordinate a nationwide program to assist these schools in participating in this program," Clyburn said.

The problems facing historically black colleges are not just aesthetic.

The nation's historically black colleges, including the seven in South Carolina, have been under financial strain for some time.

So far this year:

???????_S. C. State University in Orangeburg instituted a 15-day furlough, or mandatory, unpaid period of time off for all employees in February (it was later reduced to 10 days using lottery funds).

???????_Allen University of Columbia slashed its budget by nearly one-third in January, forcing it to cut personnel and services.

???????_Columbia's Benedict College told employees in January that holidays that normally would have been paid would be unpaid for six months as a cost-saving measure.

Much of the conference, which will be held at the Medical University of South Carolina, will focus on how to increase state and federal funding to these colleges and how to encourage alumni and corporate donations.

Participants also will discuss how to reaffirm and expand the role black colleges should play in research and scholarship.

"The message is that if the state of South Carolina and the nation is committed to sustaining our prosperity ... we must have historically black colleges at the table in terms of formulating policies and conducting research," said N. Joyce Payne, of the Washington, D.C.-based National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

She said today's conference will be the first she has been to outside of the nation's capital that addressed the state of historically black colleges.

This is the third time in as many years that Clyburn has gathered the Congressional Black Caucus in Charleston.

His discussion on African-American culture two years ago has led to plans for a \$40 million international African-American history museum in Charleston.

Last year, the group discussed health disparities.

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Posted on Fri, Jun. 06, 2003

Regional Technology Council up and running

Executive board, trustees are named, ready to draft plan to bring high-paying tech jobs to area

By C. GRANT JACKSON
Business Editor

Eleven people from government, business and education with the will and power to get things done have agreed to steer the region's effort to become a hub of high-paying technology jobs.

The membership of the executive committee of the Columbia Regional Technology Council and the makeup of a larger board of trustees were released Thursday.

The council will try to achieve Columbia Mayor Bob Coble's vision to reshape the region's economy. Columbia Regional Technology Council is the new name for the Technology Leadership Council.

Serving on the executive committee from government are Coble, Lexington County Council chairman George W. "Smokey" Davis, Columbia City Council member Anne Sinclair and Richland County Councilman Tony Mizzell.

Business is represented by John Lumpkin, president of Edens & Avant Real Estate Services; Lee Bussell, CEO of CNSG and president-elect of the S.C. Chamber of Commerce; James E. Clark of NextUp Ventures; and Cathy Lanier of TSI of Lexington.

Lanier chaired and Clark served on the mayor's task force that wrote the regional technology plan.

Education members are Midlands Technology College President Barry Russell and USC President Andrew Sorensen.

The eleventh member is Jim Fields, director of the Palmetto Institute.

"This is a regional thing and I'm very sensitive to making sure it stays regional," said consultant Neil McLean, who was hired by the city to launch the plan.

In addition to the executive committee, an advisory board of 46 trustees has been asked to serve. About 30 have accepted so far. (For the list, visit www.thestate.com.)

The diverse board includes representatives of the area's colleges, venture capitalists, state government, business development agencies, USC and the local business community.

All were sent invitations on behalf of Coble and Sorensen to join the effort to transform the region's economy.

"There is a combination of chiefs and Indians," McLean said. "We are going to need both to get this thing done. These are all folks that make things happen in Columbia. Some of them are the top folks in their organization and some of them are the technology operators."

The executive committee will meet in about two weeks to start on a business plan for the council.

The goal is to have a draft by the end of July.

"It is aggressive, but we feel like the business plan is going to be critical in our efforts to get funding," both from government and the private sector, McLean said. "We've got to say this is what we need and this is what we are going to do with it, and this is the result you can expect to see."

McLean, whose firm Sagacious Partners was hired by the city less than three weeks ago, said he wants the council to focus on action.

"I think all the recommending is done at this point," he said. The executive committee will set priorities and the board of advisers will participate on project teams to make things happen.

"I want to be very project- and initiative-oriented, so that things have a beginning and an end. They need to be measurable so people can see what is happening," McLean said.

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Posted on Fri, Jun. 06, 2003

Civil rights activist dies at 98

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. - James T. McCain, a longtime civil rights activist who started working for the movement more than 80 years ago, has died.

He was 98.

McCain was field secretary of the Congress of Racial Equality from 1957 to 1966, responsible for several Southeastern states including South Carolina. He taught students about nonviolent protest during that time and helped aspiring voters register and arranged sit-ins.

The Sumter native had been hospitalized with pneumonia for several weeks and died Thursday in his hometown.

Memories of McCain are of the civil rights movement.

"I remember one night when he pulled me out of a social event in Sumter, and we drove to Rock Hill to get someone out of jail, one of the Freedom Riders," said Ernest A. Finney, retired S.C. Supreme Court chief justice who became CORE's legal counsel in South Carolina.

The Freedom Riders of 1961 were black and white men and women riding Trailways and Greyhound buses through the Deep South. CORE organized the rides to test a 1960 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregated waiting rooms, lunch counters and bathrooms were unconstitutional.

That work kept him on the road, his son said.

"The only regret I have is that he was away during the civil rights movement," said James McCain Jr., a UPS manager in Atlanta. "So I'm glad God gave him 98 years, since He took 15 away."

Finney called him "one of the stalwarts of the civil rights community."

"I'm very sad," he said. "On the one hand he was kind; on the other hand, he was a mighty oak. He had strength, integrity, and he was straightforward. If Nooker McCain said it was going to rain, you better get your boots on."

McCain, who was helping aspiring voters register in 1921, played a pivotal role in an effort called the Sumter Movement beginning in 1962. Along with several others, including Finney, McCain helped organize a committee to reason with local merchants and governments to hire blacks.

After four months of fruitless meetings, the group started the movement. They picketed City Hall, the county courthouse and businesses, successfully shutting down the local Kress five-and-dime store, said Bishop Frederick C. James of Columbia.

"At the end of the summer of 1963, we had young people working at the courthouse, City Hall and at checkout counters," James said. "J.T. McCain was a part of all of that."

McCain also is survived by his wife, Ida Mae Chennault McCain, 91; and daughters Arnetta Ellison, a retired teacher, and Joyce Doty, an elementary school teacher, both in Chicago.

Arrangements were pending Friday at Palmer Memorial Chapel in Sumter.

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Posted on Thu, Jun. 05, 2003

Southtrust building in downtown Columbia reopens

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. - State employees who work at the Southtrust building in downtown Columbia will be able to return to work Friday, officials at the Budget and Control Board say.

Mechanical problems shut down the building Wednesday and Thursday but it should be repaired by Friday, officials said.

Workers from the Budget and Control Board and the state Commerce Department have offices in the building across the street from the Statehouse complex.

Employees can check www.myscgov.com for updates.

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